

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, SALT, UR, US

SUBJ: USA INSTITUTE ON SALT PROSPECTS IN 1976

1. SUMMARY. SPOT JUDGMENTS ON 1976 SALT PROSPECTS FROM USA INSTITUTE OFFICIALS OVER PAST SIX WEEKS SHOW SOME DIVERSITY, AND MAY INDICATE SOME CONFUSION. END SUMMARY.

2. AT RECEPTION JUNE 23, INSTITUTE EXECSEC IVANYAN SAID IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR USSR TO REFUSE A SUBSTANTIVELY ACCEPTABLE U.S. OFFER OF A SALT AGREEMENT THIS YEAR, DESPITE THE UNCERTAINTIES CONCERNING RATIFICATION WHICH ARISE DURING THE ELECTION YEAR: "IF WE LOOK BAD IN U.S. PUBLIC OPINION NOW, IMAGINE HOW WE WOULD LOOK IF WE TURNED DOWN A GOOD OFFER".

3. AT SPASO FILM SHOWING JULY 21, INSTITUTE ARMS CONTROL THEORIST YURIY STREL'TSOV SAID THAT "IF HE WERE A SOVIET LEADER" HE DOUBTED HE WOULD SIGN AN AGREEMENT THIS YEAR. ALTHOUGH IT WAS TRUE THAT CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY, AS DESCRIBED IN HIS STATEMENTS, WAS COVERGENT IN MAIN LINES WITH PRESENT ADMINISTRATION'S THERE WAS STILL TOO MUCH UNCERTAINTY, TOO MANY CHANCES THAT A SIGNED BUT UNRATIFIED AGREEMENT WOULD NEED TO BE RENEGOTIATED NEXT YEAR. STILL, STREL'TSOV MUSED, IF AN AGREEMENT WERE NOT SIGNED THIS YEAR, THE TWO SIDES WOULD BE RUNNING UP AGAINST THE EXPIRATION

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OF THE INTERIM AGREEMENT IN MID-SUMMER 1977. THE TROUBLE,

HE CONCLUDED, WAS THAT DELAYS IN TURNING THE VLADIVOSTOK UNDERSTANDING INTO AN AGREEMENT HAD DEPRIVED SALT II OF ARMS CONTROL SIGNIFICANCE, LEAVING ONLY ITS "POLITICAL" SIGNIFICANCE AS AN EARNEST OF GOOD INTENTIONS; THE NEED WAS TO GET IT OVER WITH IN ORTHER TO GET ON TO SERIOUS ARMS CONTROL BUSINESS, BUT IT WOULD NOT ITSELF BE A SIGNIFICANT ARMS CONTROL STEP. ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT SOVIETS COULD AFFORD PUBLIC BLACK EYE THEY WOULD GET IF THEY REFUSED A SUBSTANTIVELY ACCEPTABLE OFFER, STREL'TSOV SAID HE THOUGHT THEY COULD MAKE A GOOD ARGUMENT THAT THEY HAD DONE WHAT DEPENDED ON THEM TO REACH AGREEMENT AND THAT THE SUBJECT MATTER WAS TOO IMPORTANT TO WRAP UP IN THE HEAT OF AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

4. IN CHANCE ENCOUNTER AUGUST 7, INSTITUTE DEPUTY DIRECTOR BOGDANOV WAS BEARISH ON PROSPECTS: THE SOVIETS THOUGHT THEY HAD MADE A GOOD OFFER IN FEBRUARY, HE SAID, AND DID NOT SEE MUCH REASON FOR FURTHER CONCESSIONS; EVEN IF NEGOTIATIONS RAN INTO NEXT YEAR, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO EXTEND THE INTERIM AGREEMENT LIMITS UNTIL THEY WERE COMPLETED.

5. COMMENT. DIFFERENCES IN OUTLOOK MAY REFLECT DEVELOPMENT ON U.S. SCENE OVER SIX-WEEK PERIOD, AND IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE MORE AUTHORITATIVE THE SOURCE THE MORE RETICENT THE COMMENT, PERHAPS REFLECTING MOUNTING HESITANCY TO BE PUT IN DEMANDEUR ROLE AS RANK AND RESPONSIBILITY INCREASE. AT SAME TIME, DIVERSITY OF COMMENT MAY REFLECT GENUINE DIVERSITY OF VIEWS ON DIFFICULT TOPIC, AND PERHAPS EVEN SOME CONFUSION IN TYPE OF ADVICE INSTITUTE MAY CURRENTLY BE GIVING. ARBATOV WENT ON VACATION AUGUST 7, SO QUESTION OF INSTITUTE ADVICE MAY BE MOOT FOR TIME BEING. STOESEL

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